



Keys Wild Birds Have Rehabilitation Facilities

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"Every bird that is returned to the wild in good condition probably goes on to reproduce and contribute its offspring to future generations," stated Bruce Horn of the Florida Keys Wild Bird Center. "Saving even one wild bird actually means saving that bird *and* all of its offspring," he added.

The Florida Keys Wild Bird Center, which began in 1984 through the efforts of local veterinarian Dr. Foley and retired school teacher Laura Quinn, is one of the four non-profit wild bird rehabilitation centers located throughout the Keys. Each of the four facilities offers advice about how to deal with wild bird injuries over the telephone. They provide shelter during and after rehabilitation and every effort is made to return the bird to the place where it was rescued. While all these facilities are open to the public, the Florida Keys Wild Bird Center offers self-guided environmental education tours through a variety of natural habitats.

Living in the Keys or visiting them means encountering birds and other wildlife on a regular basis--out at the reef, on your dock, in your backyard, and along our roads.



The double-crested cormorant is one of the more common species of waterbirds brought to rehabilitation centers with injuries (above). In some cases, birds are not able to return to the wild due to the nature of the injury. Instead, they live out their lives in captivity, depending upon the bird center for food and shelter.

Wild Bird Rescue Contact Info

Upper Keys--Key Largo

Florida Keys Wild Bird Center
(305) 852-4486

Middle Keys--Marathon

Marathon Wild Bird Rescue
(305) 743-8382

Middle Keys--Big Pine
Exotic and Wild Bird Rescue
(305) 872-1982

Lower Keys--Key West

Wildlife Rescue of the Florida Keys
(305) 294-1441

Here are just a few things that you can do to reduce wild bird mortality:

- *Contact a wild bird rehabilitation center to learn how to aid in the rescue of wild birds. Volunteer to help at a center near you.
- * If you see an injured bird and are unable to safely capture it, keep an eye on it and/or try to contain it using a box until you can call the closest wild bird center for further advice.
- * Slow down if you see a bird in or near the road to avoid injuring it. (Obviously, keep in mind your own safety, too.)
- *Do not feed wild birds large fish or filleted fish carcasses. Some fish are too large for birds to fully swallow and the bones from filleted carcasses lodge in their throats, causing the birds to starve.
- * Properly dispose of fishhooks, fishing line, plastic six-pack holders, plastic bags, and your other trash. Pick up and properly dispose of any trash you see in the water, on the beach or along the roadside...*even if it is not yours, please!*

* If you are an angler, contact one of the bird centers to learn how to remove hooks from the beaks of hooked birds. Birds that feed on fish, like pelicans and cormorants, often become hooked by fish hooks and subsequently entangled in the attached fishing line.

Note: This article appeared in the Fall 2002 issue of the newsletter of the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary, **Sounding Line**. For more information, visit: floridakeys.noaa.gov. (This information was adapted from "What You Can Do" by Kelly Grinter, Exotic and Wild Bird Rescue.)